

## **ECONOMIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION**

Concern over the quality of water, fisheries, wetlands and habitat in the Albemarle-Pamlico (APES) region has prompted public and private entities to collaborate on the management of the region's resources. To coordinate this effort, the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study Program was begun in 1987 under the joint sponsorship of the State of North Carolina's Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study (APES) has sponsored a large body of research looking specifically at the natural resources of the APES region, including fisheries resources, water quality, human environments (i.e., the use of land and water resources, including public trust areas), and vital habitats (including wetlands). The results of this research, as well as the input of researchers, experts from federal and state natural resource and environmental protection agencies, local government officials, private interest groups and individual citizens, have gone into the development of a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the APES region. The CCMP is divided into five broad areas of focus - water quality, fisheries, vital habitats, stewardship (planning, education, public awareness and public involvement), and implementation. These component plans address environmental problems related to that area of focus, the status of current laws and management efforts to deal with these problems, and the needs in each area for enhancing these efforts. The CCMP, therefore, is intended to encompass existing and on-going efforts as well as new proposed efforts, and includes action by corporations, individuals and non-profits, as well as state, federal and local governments.

The CCMP deals almost exclusively with the State of North Carolina. No attempt is made here to assess the applicability of the Management Actions to Virginia, part of which falls within the APES region. Note that the Implementation Plan of the CCMP recommends extending the plan to Virginia but make no specific recommendations as to the substance or timing of adapting the CCMP to Virginia.

#### **Study objectives**

Resource Analytics, Inc. (RAI), of Raleigh, North Carolina, was contracted to review the component plans of the CCMP as the document evolved. The primary objective of this study was to characterize the economic issues raised by the implementation of the CCMP. An economic characterization is a qualitative analysis of the costs and benefits that would occur